



THE WESTERN CRIMINOLOGIST

Fall 2004

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE WESTERN SOCIETY OF CRIMINOLOGY

Editor: Dr. Miki Vohryzek-Bolden, Criminal Justice Division, CSU-Sacramento, 6000 J St. Sacramento, CA 95819-6085

From the President

Cynthia Burke

San Diego Association of Governments

As a member of the WSC for eleven years, I have felt very fortunate to have been a part of such a unique organization for researchers, as well as practitioners. Like many others, I have enjoyed the more intimate sessions, as well as the opportunity to meet other members and learn more about the work they are doing in our field. As the President for the past four months, I have been especially proud of the accomplishments of the organization, as well as its members. Our 31st Annual Conference in Long Beach this year was attended by over 100 individuals from around the Western United States, as well as from the East Coast and Europe. Some of the highlights for me included the keynote address by Long Beach Chief of Police Tony Bates, as well as Saturday's Award's Luncheon.

Our 2004-05 Board has already met twice this year, including in Seattle this April (which will be the site of our 2006 conference). However, before we go to the Pacific Northwest, we'll be looking forward to having you join us in Honolulu, Hawaii for our conference February 17-19, 2005. Next year's conference theme will be "Meeting the Challenge: Translating Research into Practice" and a call for papers is now available on our Web site. Some of the highlights for this meeting will include a number of panels on the topic of jurisprudence, plenary sessions on gender issues in the criminal justice system, as well as opportunities for family members to attend parts of the conference at a discounted rate. If you have any suggestions or thoughts about next year's conference, please let us know.

I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the dedication and hard work of my colleagues on the Board who make my job easy. WSC has been lucky to have Mike Day serve as the Secretary/Treasurer of the organization for a number of years. Many of you may have met Mike at the registration desk in Long Beach or Vancouver. Gisela Bichler is our Vice-President, as well as Co-Editor of the *Western Criminology Review* with Steve Tibbetts. Gisela and Steve have done an outstanding job on WSC's journal, while maintaining their own rigorous positions at CSU San Bernardino. Chris Curtis, a Past President, has returned to the Board for a one year term. I worked with Chris at SANDAG for

several years and am very glad we were able to have her on the Board again. Angel Ilarraza is our immediate Past President. As a Board Member, Angel has contributed to a number of committees and I am grateful to have his history and insight as I follow in his footsteps. Brenda Vogel did such an excellent job as Facilities Chair for our 2004 conference, that I asked her to continue on in this role in 2005 and she accepted. Sue Cote is also carrying on her own torch, serving as Program Chair for a second year in a row. Carrie Petrucci and John Vivian are other returning Board members. Their efforts on membership and publicity have made them real assets to the Board. Neil Boyd is completing his last year on the Board and is continuing to do an excellent job on the site selection committee. At my request, David Huizinga accepted an additional year on the Board. It has been a treat to have the opportunity to work with David, especially for an extra year. Sandy Keaton was appointed for a Counselor-at-Large position and is taking care of our awards committee this year. Lisa Pasko is our student representative. Lisa served in this capacity once before and we look forward to her continued input. Adrienne Freng, with the University of Wyoming, was elected to a three-year Executive Counselor position and is coordinating nominations to the Board. Katy Irwin is our newest Board member. Katy is a faculty member at the University of Hawaii and serves on the book exhibit committee. Last but not least, I'd like to thank Miki Vohryzek-Bolden for her lengthy service to the Board and her commitment to maintaining its high quality reputation.

In closing, I would like to encourage members to share information about WSC with their students and to tell them about organization opportunities, including the June Morrison Scholarship, which provides \$100 for students to attend the annual conference, as well as the annual student paper competition. In recent years, the number of applicants have declined and

In This Issue:

- *From The President* 1
- *Student Paper* 2
- *WSC Awards 2004*..... 3
- *Acknowledgment of Sponsors* 3
- *Come Join Us!* 3

encouraging student participation is an important part of our organization. In addition, I encourage all members interested in becoming more involved in the WSC to contact me or one of our other Board members.

Aloha!



***First Place
Student Paper Award Winner***

Tomson H. Nguyen
University of California, Irvine

The Business of Illegal Gambling: An Observational Study of a Vietnamese Café in Southern California

Since the mid 1990s, a new type of gambling device has concerned law enforcement, particularly in the ethnical enclave known as Little Saigon, California. Although these new gambling devices are similar to the video poker machines seen in Las Vegas, they are also unique in many aspects. The unique ability of these machines to switch from a poker machine to a typical video game machine using a remote control has made it difficult for law enforcement to detect. During previous investigations, police have searched Vietnamese cafés suspected of running a gaming business only to find patrons playing video games (Yi, 2000). With the introduction of these video poker machines, came the businesses that operated the machines and offered its patrons the service of gambling—the Vietnamese café.

The setting for this study was a Vietnamese café in southern California. Methodologically, the decision was made to use covert non-participant observation as the main data collection technique. Since the social structure of the café was under scrutiny, covert observation was necessary to truly view the natural behavior of patrons in their environment. Observations were conducted while sitting inside the café within close proximity to the video poker gambling machines. The researcher observed behavioral patterns and social processes by watching and listening to what was being said and what the gamblers in the café were doing. No interactions with the gamblers were necessary.

One aspect of this study was to determine whether a social structure existed within the Vietnamese café. Similar to what McSkimming (1999) found in his study of tavern gaming and gambling, a fairly clear social structure exists in the Vietnamese gambling café. The actors in this structure were identified and categorized as gamblers, regular patrons, friends and family members of patrons or gamblers, new patrons (potential gamblers), and strangers.

The gambler, for example, is an individual that enters the café mainly for the purposes of gambling. Although gamblers may engage in certain activities similar to the regular patrons, such as purchasing drinks and socializing with other café patrons, their main purpose in the café is to gamble. A gambler may spend up to 90 percent of his/her time in the café gambling. Gamblers are highly trusted individuals within the café. They gained this trust by developing a relationship with the owner as well as other patrons of the café. As such, they are given full access to all the services that the café offers. Since gamblers are the primary source of income, they are treated with much courtesy by the owner of the café.

It was surprising to find that all of the members of the café community contributed to the maintenance of the illegitimate gambling business. Since taverns and bars can be construed as “small societies” (Spradley & Mann 1975), one may expect the members of the “society” to protect it. In this study, members of the café, whether or not they utilized the illegal gambling services, were found to contribute to protecting the gambling business.

Another aspect of this study examined the gambling procedures of the business; how are gambling games initiated, deposits taken, and winnings dispersed? With the introduction of technology, illegal gambling operations are no longer held in secret locations rather, it is in the purview of the public. Thus, operating such a business without detection from the public or law enforcement is by no means a miniscule task.

Operating an illegitimate gambling business within a legitimate Vietnamese café required an established process by which possible detection by law enforcement is minimized. For instance, the simple process of initiating a gambling game by a gambler required notifying the gambling operator of an intention to gamble, making a cash deposit, having the gambling operator switch gambling machines from videogame interface to gambling interface, and finally having the gambling operator insert the amount deposited via remote control. A withdrawal of winnings took on a completely different process. The findings of this study detailed and described the gambling process and indicated that the social structure plays an important role in maintaining the café community.

References

- McSkimming, M. 1999. “Deviance and tavern culture in rural Pennsylvania: Gaming vs. gambling.” Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, Indiana University of Pennsylvania.*
- Spradley, J. P., & Mann, B. J. 1975. The cocktail waitress: Work in a man’s world. New York, NY: John Wiley.*
- Yi, D. (2000). “Latest game: Pacman with a poker face.” Los Angeles Times. May 5, p. 7.*



WSC Awards 2004

Recipients of the Western Society of Criminology Fellow Awards

2003-2004

*Individuals Generally Associated With the Western Region Who
Have Made Important Contributions to the Field of Criminology*

David Shichor

Recipients of the Western Society of Criminology Awards

2003-2004

*The Paul Tappan Award
For Outstanding Contributions to the Field of Criminology*

M. Douglas Anglin

*The Joseph D. Lohman Award
For Outstanding Service to the Western Society of Criminology*

Libby Deschenes and Sabra Horne

*The June Morrison-Tom Gitchoff Founders Award
For Significant Improvement of the Quality of Justice*

Honorable Leonard Edwards and Honorable Wendy Lindley

*President's Award For Contributions to the Field of Criminology
and Positive Influence on the Current President's Career*

Donald Adamchak

*W.E.B. DuBois Award For Significant Contributions to the Field
of Racial and Ethnic Issues in Criminology*

Cassia C. Spohn



Acknowledgment of Sponsors

The Executive Board of the Western Society of Criminology, on behalf of itself and all of the members of the association, wishes to express thanks and appreciation to all of the individuals and groups who supported the 2004 annual conference in Long Beach, California: College of Health and Human Services, California State University, Long Beach; College of Health and Human Services, California State University, Sacramento; and CPAL.



COME JOIN US!

**WESTERN SOCIETY OF CRIMINOLOGY
32ND ANNUAL CONFERENCE
ALA MOANA HOTEL, HONOLULU, HAWAII
FEBRUARY 17 – 19, 2005**

We encourage you to mark your calendar for the 32nd Annual Conference of the WSC. The theme of the conference is *Meeting the Challenge: Translating Research into Practice*. The program chair is Dr. Sue Cote, Criminal Justice Division, California State University, Sacramento, 6000 J Street, Sacramento, CA, 95819-6085. Please contact Dr. Cote at scote@csus.edu or check out our website – www.sonoma.edu/cja/wsc/main/html for detailed information on the conference. Aloha.



The Western Criminologist
Michael Day
Portland State University
P.O. Box 751
Portland, Oregon 97207-0751



Internet Access

President: Cynthia Burke - cbu@sandag.org
Secretary/Treasurer: Michael Day - daym@pdx.edu
Newsletter Editor: Miki Vohryzek-Bolden - vohryzek@csus.edu
Journal Co-Editors: Gisela Bichler-Robertson - gbichler@csusb.edu
Steve Tibbetts - stibbett@csusb.edu
WSC Webpage: <http://www.sonoma.edu/cja/wsc/wscmain.html>.
Membership Information: Carrie Petrucci - cpetruc@csulb.edu